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X-10A

29 January 1976

Projections of Soviet Intercontinental Attack  
Forces and Possible Reductions for SALT

The [REDACTED] includes projections of Soviet intercontinental attack forces in October 1977 and in mid-1980 assuming a SALT ceiling of 2,400 delivery vehicles. It also lists the type and number of those weapon systems that would be retired by mid-1980 if SALT limits of 2,300, 2,200 and 2,150 delivery vehicles are assumed. The data [REDACTED] were derived from new projections of Soviet intercontinental attack forces for the period 1976 to 1985. The estimated force levels generally are based on the postulations that are described for the Best Estimate of future Soviet forces (Force 1) in NIE 11-3/8-75. Force 1 is one of three projections which assume a SALT II agreement with a limit of 2,400 delivery vehicles. The projections assume for most systems the same rates of deployment, technical characteristics, and Soviet levels of effort as those postulated in the estimate.

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The new set of projections differs from Force 1 in NIE 11-3/8-75 because new evidence has become available. Three lower aggregate force levels-- 2,300, 2,200 and 2,150--are assumed. The projections of Soviet forces and the reductions to meet the lower aggregate ceilings are preliminary estimates and, in some cases, are based on arbitrary assumptions about future Soviet force planning. Some of the systems that are deactivated to meet the lower aggregate force levels are presently assigned peripheral attack missions. These roles will be filled with the appearance of Backfire and the SS-X-20 in large numbers.

The initial reductions to reach the 2,400 limit on 3 October 1977 are postulated on the basis that the Soviets would be likely to retire their oldest systems first and that Long-Range Aviation (LRA), the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF), and the Navy would all share in the cut to some extent.

The reductions to reach the 2,300, 2,200, and 2,150 limits in mid-1980 are based on essentially the same principles. However, two alternative forces

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are projected for each aggregate limit. Alternative 1 in each instance assumes that the Soviets retain only enough LRA aircraft to maintain an open-ocean antiship capability. Alternative 2 assumes that the LRA also would continue to have an intercontinental strike force.

ICBMs

For the land-based missile forces it is estimated that the SS-13s and portions of the SS-11 Mod 2 and Mod 3 force would be deactivated after the entire SS-7 and SS-8 force is retired. The new projections differ from those of Force 1 in NIE 11-3/8-75 in two areas:

- The SS-X-16 is not deployed and the SS-13 is maintained in the force through 1979 because it is assumed that the Soviets would not deploy this new missile system for only two or three years.
- The SS-11 Mod 2 and Mod 3 force is further reduced by at least 10 and up to as many as 140 launchers by 1980. The size of the reduction is related to the ceiling imposed and the number of heavy bombers remaining in LRA.

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SLBMs

Under the pressure of an overall force reduction the Soviet Navy would look first to its aging H-class force--21 SS-N-5 launchers on 7 H-II class SSBNs. The number of additional SLBM launchers dismantled will depend on Soviet plans for the modernization of the SLBM force. At present the extent of this modernization program is not clear.

If forced to make reductions in addition to deactivation of the H-class, it is likely that the Soviet Navy would dismantle older Y-class units rather than decrease production of the more modern D-class variants or a new SSBN. Assuming the same SSBN production schedule as projected in NIE 11-3/8-75 Y-class units may begin to leave the force as early as 1978.

Recent flight test data on the new solid propellant SLBM [REDACTED]--the probable follow-on for the SLBM now on the Y-class--indicate that the missile has a postboost vehicle and could carry MIRVs.

Deployment of a MIRVed [REDACTED] would increase the number of MIRVed SLBMs over that projected in NIE

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11-3/8-75. In view of the new evidence it is estimated that under a SALT II agreement that the Soviets would convert fewer Y-class submarines to carry the [REDACTED] than projected in 11-3/8-75. In the new projections, it is assumed that seven Y-class units are modified by 1985 to carry a MIRVed [REDACTED] NIE 11-3/8-75 projected that 16 units would be outfitted with a single RV [REDACTED] by that time.

#### Bombers

The future of the heavy bomber force is a major area of uncertainty. One set of projections (Alternative 1) calls for the Soviets to retire their long-range bomber force. It assumes that the Soviets decide to cushion the impact of a lower aggregate ceiling on their ICBM and SLBM modernization programs by retiring most of their Bears. Alternative 1 postulates that the Soviets will devote a larger portion of their Backfire force to antiship strikes in the open ocean than is presently anticipated. It therefore assumes that the LRA, because it will have significant resources for peripheral attack with the deployment of Backfire and the retention of some older aircraft, would be willing to forego its intercontinental attack mission.

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Another set of projections (Alternative 2), which calls for the Soviets to develop a new heavy bomber, results in a bomber force similar to the one postulated in Force 1, NIE 11-3/8-75 and it assumes that the Soviets make this decision to:

- enhance the flexibility of their inter-continental attack forces by maintaining a credible heavy bomber force through the 1980s;
- maintain the capability for antiship strikes in the open ocean that the Bear air-to-surface missile carriers now provide.

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